

December 2002



King County

Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and
Dependency Services Division

The Good Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 2

From the editor:

This newsletter is an effort by the King County Regional Support Network (KCRSN) and the Quality Review Team to document the thoughts of consumers, youth and supporting staff.

The King County Regional Support Network (KCRSN) which funds mental health is responsible for publicly funded mental health services in King County.



WANTED:

Articles, poetry, stories from readers of the newsletter.

If you have a personal story to tell, helpful information you would like to share or creative expression such as poetry, pictures or art, please mail them to:

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My e-mail address is:
steven.collins@metrokc.gov

Letters, articles & information submitted may be edited for clarity and content.

Remember this is the good newsletter.

Program addresses homelessness:

The City of Seattle Office of Housing will staff the "Sound Family Program" to help create 1,560 transitional housing units in King, Snohomish and Pierce counties over the next three years. The goal of the Sound Families Program is to make a significant impact on the lives of homeless families in crisis and to help them move toward self-sufficiency.

The money to establish the Sound Family Program came from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in the form of a grant worth \$40 million dollars. There are 24 housing projects funded and 10 are currently up and running.

The first five grant awards were given to: Housing Hope in Everett; Vision House in Renton; St. Stevens Housing Association in Auburn.

Low Income Housing Institute in Seattle; and the Hearing, Speech & Deafness Center in Seattle.

Services, including case management services, are available at each residential site.

Sound Family funds other agencies that in turn provide services to families.

For more information about services for families call the Community Information Line at 1-800 621-4636.

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Mission Statement:

The knowledge and wisdom that comes from personal experience as a consumer of the mental health system should be shared with all who have an eye and an ear to absorb what is written.

The pen is the excellent communicator. Our commitment is to make the consumer voice heard and acknowledged in King County.

Article from youth:

The purpose of this article is to give readers insight into issues that are important to young people. The Program, "Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets" (PSKS) accepts homeless youth. Some have mental health issues, some have mental health and addiction issues. Special Education is another area of support for Kids.

The introduction below is from Janaea M. Bellows, instructor from a program called Re-Inventing Steps to Knowledge (R.I.S.K.) which helps PSKS youth prepare for the General Education Diploma test (GED).

Also included are brief excerpts from five different letters written by R.I.S.K. learning center students that speak about their experiences.

Introduction:

Thank you for giving the students a chance to express their feelings about the school system. I'm abso-

lutely elated about this. It'll be so nice to see what my students think about education. They obviously appreciate it because they're here, however, they are so rarely listened to and their stories are important. Each is different. The educational system has failed them in so many ways and we all appreciate the chance to be heard. Once again thank you. - Janaea

"I went from stays in an institution to homelessness and finally to a stable school situation. My life is much better now".
- David

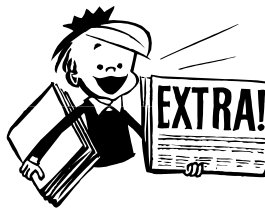
"I was kicked out of school, kicked out of my home which led to living on the streets where I got hooked on I.V. drugs which I recently got off of. I am now in school and I will be attending a rehab facility shortly". - Joclyn age 17

I never had much success in school and I dropped out in the 8th grade. My aunt told me about Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets. So far its working out. - Imelda

Montes

I did not have a good experience in high school, but now that's all different. I'm at "Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets" and even though I'm not necessarily a perfect student I have prepared for all five GED tests and it looks promising. So I figure if I can do it just about anyone can.

--Tanner Welleer



age 17

I attended several different schools and was not happy. In my experience in two schools I found that there were only three people I could trust. At "Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets" (PSKS) I trust everyone.

--William Fischer age 17

If you would like more information about either R.I.S.K. or PSKS, contact Janaea Bellows at (206) 726-8500 Ex 2

Clients put on a festival for the tent city residents:

By: Jose Molina and
Larry McCann



Nineteen Harborview Mental Health Ser-

vices clients held a festival at Tent City Saturday July 27th. It was a tremendous success that truly honored mental health consumers in a most remarkable way.

The festival was funded from a bequest left by Sue Gosline, Harborview Mental Health chaplain, who passed away last spring. Ms Goslin was concerned about the impact of

budget cuts on clients field trips and parties and she had attended many of these events and wanted to help reinstate them, so she specified in her bequest that clients themselves should decide how to use the money. She named the account "The Consumer Planning Council Fund" hoping that the Harborview Mental Health Service Consumer Planning Council would accept responsibility for managing the new fund.

The Council meets weekly. They

decided to use some of the money to help the homeless. On July 27th, 19 clients provided Tent City with a 4 hour festival featuring burgers, snacks, high quality beverages, bingo games, and dancing to live rock n' roll music. (The band Larry & the Lizards couldn't resist this opportunity to join the party).

About one hundred homeless Seattleites were treated to a high-energy private festival at their shelter in the parking lot behind St. Mark's Ca-

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Information about diabetes:

By: Lenore Meyer

As you may know, diabetes is growing rapidly in this country. At the mental health center that I go to the number of people that I know who have diabetes just keeps growing. Since it is a very serious disease I thought I would give you some information about it.

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a serious, chronic condition of high blood sugar. Left untreated, it may result in blindness, heart attacks, strokes, kidney failure and amputations. Diabetes is the fourth leading cause of death in the U.S. More than 178,000 people die each year from this disease. Although over 8 million people in the United States have been diagnosed with diabetes, only half of the people who actually have the disease are diagnosed. This happens because in the early stages of diabetes there are few symptoms, or the symptoms may be the same as in other health conditions.

What are the symptoms of diabetes?

Early symptoms of diabetes include the following:

- Extreme thirst
- Frequent urination
- Unexplained weight loss
- Blurry vision that changes day to day
- Unusual tiredness or drowsiness
- Tingling or numbness in the hands or feet
- Frequent or recurring skin, gum or bladder infections

If you have any of these symptoms, call your doctor right away.

Am I at risk for diabetes?

The early stages of diabetes have very few symptoms so you may not know you have the disease. Damage may already be occurring to your eyes, your kidneys and your cardiovascular system even before you notice you have symptoms.

You have a higher chance of getting diabetes if:

- You're older than 45 years of age
- You're overweight
- You don't exercise regularly
- Your parent, brother or sister has diabetes
- You had a baby that weighed more than 9 pounds or you had gestational diabetes when you were pregnant
- You're Black, Hispanic, Native American, Asian or Pacific Islander

If you have one or more of these risk factors, your doctor may want you to be tested for diabetes. You might also be tested at a younger age and more often than every three years if you have risk factors. Talk to your doctor about your risk of developing diabetes and about a plan for regular testing.

Why is it important for diabetes to be diagnosed early?

Many people have diabetes for about five years before they show the symptoms of the disease. By that time, some people already have eye, kidney, gum or nerve damage. There is no cure for diabetes but there is hope. If you get more exercise, watch your diet, control your weight and take any medications your doctor prescribes, you can make a big difference in reducing or preventing the damage that diabetes can do. The earlier you know you have diabetes, the sooner you can make these important lifestyle changes.

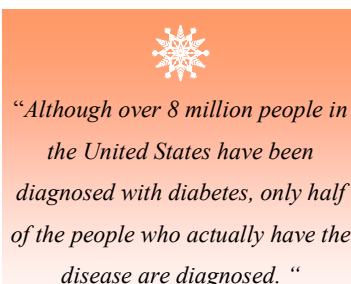
Can diabetes be prevented?

Exercising regularly, keeping your weight under control and eating a healthy diet help prevent diabetes. These methods also are helpful in treating early diabetes.

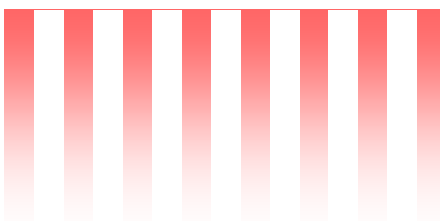
How will I be tested for diabetes?

Testing, which is also called "screening" is now done with a fasting blood test. You should have two tests on two different days before a diagnosis of diabetes is made.

*The American Academy of Family Physicians provided information for this article in association with the Gale Group and LookSmart. COPYRIGHT 2000.



"Although over 8 million people in the United States have been diagnosed with diabetes, only half of the people who actually have the disease are diagnosed."



My positive experience with aerobic exercise:

By: Steven Collins

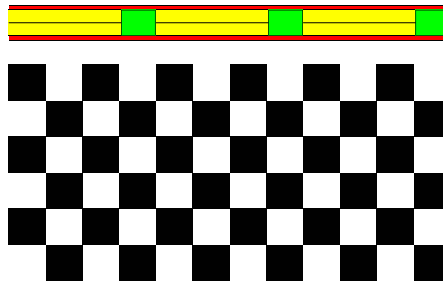
Twenty-two years ago I was a student in school with a C average. At that time I decided to take up jogging to help relieve my stress. Soon my grades improved to an A average. That's when I recognized that aerobic exercise had many positive benefits. Some of my friends got good results from other aerobic exercises like brisk walking and participating in aerobic classes.

The main benefits of aerobic activity are increased concentration, improved memory, reduced stress and weight loss. If you cut fats and sweets out of your diet along with



consistent aerobic exercise, your extra pounds will melt right off.

It is important to buy good shoes to support and protect your feet in the new activity of running, walking, or aerobic classes. Do plenty of stretching before you start your aerobic program to be sure you don't injure yourself.



Clients put on a festival for the tent city residents:

(Continued from page 2)

thedral (Sue's home church). Surely, Sue must have smiled on this very special event in her honor. The idea for the festival came from Jose Molina a client at Harborview Mental Health Services (HMHS) who stated "The clients did an excellent job!" Jose says he has always liked to help the homeless.



Creating a culture of recovery conference:



The Creating a Culture of Recovery Conference

was sponsored by, King County Mental Health Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division, Nami-Wami Advocates for the Mentally Ill and United Behavioral Health. The conference was developed to help mental health clients and professionals define and understand exactly what recovery is.

Recovery is defined as a "deeply personal, unique process of changing one's attitudes, values, feelings, goals, skills, and/or roles...to live a satisfying, hopeful and contributing life even with limitations caused by the illness."

(Anthony 1993)

There were over 200 clients and mental health staff present. Presentations and seminars were very informative. There was a lot of good information about the consumer's ability to recover and the relationship of recovery and employment.

With respect to employment, there were some comments that were discussed after the conference that can be helpful to the client who might want to go back to work as a part of their recovery process. They are:

- Keep a medication regimen
- Practice regular stress management skills (what ever works for you)
- Be able to talk with your case manager to problem solve around issues at your job

Work can be stressful. Take a good look at the job you are seeking and how supportive the environment is. Again, monitor your stress level. Go to work prepared to do the best job possible by being stress free the whole day.



January 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



Mental health for the holidays:

By: Lenore Meyer



Holidays can bring on a confusing array of emotions for anyone. People recovering from conditions like anxiety, depression, bi-polar disorders and substance abuse may be especially vulnerable. You may feel the effects of sadness, loneliness, seasonal depression and stress more easily than at other times of the year. Rather than allowing these problems to impede your recovery efforts, start preparing now for the weeks to come.

Ward off stress with exercise and good nutrition

When our bodies aren't operating at peak efficiency, we feel stressed, and our immune systems aren't operating at the level they should. Eat simple foods--an apple instead of a piece of apple pie. Cut back on fat sources. Don't forget to eat five servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

Exercise is another important stress reducer--particularly during the winter when people aren't as active as they are during other times of the year. You can make a difference to your health regime by adding just 15 minutes of exercise to your daily routine.

One way to easily increase your exercise time is if you are driving a car, park as far away from your destination as possible. Another way to add some exercise: if you are taking the bus, walk to a stop farther than the one you usually get on

at or get off one or two stops before your destination.

You'll be more motivated to add exercise to your life if you "partner"

with a friend. When you've made a commitment to take a walk with someone, you are more likely to do it. Plus you will also have more fun.



Everything you wanted to know about a drop-in center but were afraid to ask:

By: David Brady-Campbell

Hi, My name is David Brady Campbell and I've been helping coordinate the Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC) mental health program Drop-in Center since 1994. The drop-in, as we like to call it, is located in the Pioneer Square area. The Drop-in is open from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, Monday through Friday. We have up to 100 people coming in every day--lots of diverse races and cultures, people from all different parts of the country and the world.

Our job is to create a safe, warm and caring place for people, a place where they can get off the street for a while. They have the opportunity to come in, get something to eat and drink, wash their clothes and shower. They can just sit and rest, socialize with others, and participate in different activities and events depending on their preference. There is a community meet-



Quick tips for Stress Reduction:

1. Have a positive attitude
2. Try not to worry about things out of your control.
3. Problem solve with people around you. Once you know what is or will be bothering you, you can begin to plan how you will take care of yourself during the holidays.
4. Avoid drinking alcohol and caffeinated beverages.
5. Rest--try to get eight hours of sleep each day.
6. Reach out to those with whom you have a healthy relationship. If you have a difficult time with family, don't force it. Get together with friends if a family setting is not one that you feel comfortable with at the present time.
7. Don't force festivity--feeling down lets you know that something in your life is not working. If you listen to those feelings, it may help you make changes in your life.
8. Start new traditions--create what you didn't have in the past. Knowing what caused you to be blue in the past can help you create happier memories in the future by starting new traditions.

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Networking:

By: John Corr



The networking I've done in my community and in the state has helped me a

great deal in my recovery and just in getting more enjoyment out of life. I don't present this to brag, but just as things that are working for me.

I live in Auburn and the last years since I retired I've gone to a stretch and tone class at the YMCA twice a week and I do weight machines and I walk on the half mile track a couple miles. I go to the senior center after I walk and then the library, all these in one little area. At each step I look for people I've connected with before, like Justina, Laura and Cheryl who work the desk at the YMCA. I connect with Helen, Sharon and Elaine at the Senior Center, and Dave, Greg, Judy and Ann (who is retiring) and others at the Library. I check in with them almost daily

This is pretty much my weekday morning routine, one that has slowly been growing over the past 10 years. In addition I attend church and am making friends there slowly. A minister and I go for a walk on a monthly basis and I go to a men's group at the Unitarian Church. I've been the call person for a Quaker Men's group for 10 years. I also met my bride to be about 6 months ago at the Unitarian Church. She sat close to me at a church annual meeting and I asked her to go for a walk and she accepted.

I also volunteered to be on the Mayor's Task Force on the Library and later the Uniquely Auburn

Committee. I also volunteered to be on some mental health advisory councils and have made some friends that way. Currently I am on the Consumer Round Table and meet weekly as a member of the Dream Catchers consumer support Group.

I just got home from our creativity discussion group that grew out of a group at Barnes & Noble. I watch for openings and possible friendships. My network also includes monthly meetings with my Group Health Counselor.

I used to think I would want to be part of one of these think tanks and recently I

realized that as I meet with various friends we are a scattered think tank as we share ideas and feelings. In spite of all this networking, I still have to deal with depression but I feel I do much better because I reach out even if it feels awkward. I'd like to hear some other ideas of networking.



Everything you wanted to know about a drop-in center but were afraid to ask

(Continued from page 5)

ing where consumers can voice their issues and concerns. Some people get housing and still visit since they have made friendships and connections through the Drop-in.

Some people come here very afraid, and are guarded when relating to others. When they observe the Drop-in as nothing to fear, they may learn to relax and take in more from their community. The Drop-in can be a starting place in the recovery process. We have case managers, nurses, and psychiatric staff located on the periphery of the

drop-in center, so working together is easy. People can get to know different staff in the agency and feel more comfortable. Most people are facing many challenges, and we work at their pace.

As a Drop-in Center coordinator, I might see changes in a person's appearance or behavior, or sense that something is different for them. Since we all work together, I'm able to check things out with the person, talk to the case manager or nurse and try to support the person in the best way possible. New coping and socialization skills can be brought into play with the proper nurturing, listening and compassion. For me, mentoring in this way is what the Drop-in is all about.

The Drop-in is about having fun too. There are times set aside for music, video viewing, computer games, chess or whatever we might have that people are interested in. We have many drawings and other art that have been done by people here. People are encouraged to get creative with hands on projects such as beadwork, clay, and paints. Decorating the Drop-in for the holidays is also lots of fun.

In the past we have had several outings that have been enjoyed by our Drop-in folks. Events like the circus, baseball games, picnics, ferry rides, zoo aquarium and the museum. These activities bond and create wonderful memories we can look back on. We have wonderful volunteers who come to donate several hours a week and we are lucky for all of them.

I feel I've found my little niche in the mental health system. The Drop-in is both challenging and rewarding at the same time. I'm very grateful to be instrumental in the recovery process.





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